

"LONG LIVE THE KING"

Human Story of Child-Dream, Court Intrigue and Love, the Latest Novel
By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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CHAPTER XXIX (Continued)

I CONTROL the guilds. He who to-day can sway labor to his will is powerful; very powerful, comrade. Labor is the great beast which thirs of carrying burdens, and is but now learning its strength.

"Aye," said old Adelbert. "Had I seen wife, I would have joined a guild, then I might have kept my place at the Opera. As it is, I stood alone, and they but me out."

"You do not stand alone now. Stand us and we will support you. The Republic will not forget its friends."

Thus heartened, old Adelbert brightened up somewhat. Why should he, an old soldier, sweat at the thought of blood? Great changes required heroic measures.

It was because he was old that he had to act. He crept through the passageway without urging, and stood erect with shoulders squared while the bandage was removed.

He was rather longer than Olga Loschek had been in comprehending his surroundings. His old eyes at first saw little but the floor, but then he saw his grizzled leaders. But when he turned to committe his heart, failed here, embodied before him, was everything and loyal years—anarchy, murder, treason. His face worked. The cords now stood out like strings drawn to the breaking point.

"The Chancellor was speaking. For all he boasted, he was ill at ease. His voice had lost its bravado and had taken on a fawning note.

"This is the man of whom word was sent to the committee," he said. "I ventured to ask that he be allowed to come here, because he brings information of value."

"Adelbert, Excellency. As to occupation, for years I was connected with the Opera. Then I gave up. Excellency, then I took up, and another... His name... What with excitement and error, he was close to tears. "Now I am reduced to selling tickets for an American contrivance, a foolish thing, but I earn my bread by it."

He paused, but the silence continued unbroken. The set of eyes behind the mask were turned squarely on him, old Adelbert fidgued. "Before that, many years gone by, I was in the army," he said, feeling that more was expected of him, and being at a loss. "I fought hard, and once, when I suffered a loss, you perceive, the King himself came to my bed, and decorated me. Until lately, I have been royal. Now, I am—here."

He laid his hand on the chair, and what is the information that brings you here?"

Suddenly old Adelbert wept, terribly. The tears that forced their way from his faded eyes, and ran down his cheeks, "I cannot, Excellency!" he cried. "I am ill."

He collapsed into the chair, and threw his arms across the table, bowed his head on them. His shoulders leaved under his old uniform. The committee stared, and the Chancellor caught him by the wrist.

"Up with you!" he said from clenched teeth. "What stupidity is this? Would you play with death?"

Old Adelbert was beyond rear. He took his head. "I cannot," he muttered, his face hidden.

The Chancellor stood erect and held his arms across his chest. "He terrified, that is all," he said. "The Committee wishes, I can tell them of this matter. Later, he can be interrogated."

The leader nodded.

"By chance," said the Chancellor, "this brave vessel—he glanced condescendingly at the huddled figure in the chair—"has come across an old passage, one which no man has laid eye under his city hall and for which we have at present time instituted search."

He paused to give his words weight, that they were of supreme import could tell from the craning forward of the committee.

"The entrance is concealed at the base of the old Gate of the Moon. Our friend will follow it, and reports it in good condition. For a mile or thereabouts it follows the line of the destroyed wall. Then turns and goes to the palace."

"Info the palace?"

"By a flight of stairs, inside the wall, a door in the roof. This door, which was locked, he opened, having carried keys with him. The door he describes did not open clearly, but the roof at that point?"

"Stand up, Adelbert," said the leader sharply. "This that our comrade tells true?"

"It is true, Excellency." Shows a diagram of the palace, could we look at this?"

old Adelbert stared around him hopefully. It was done now. Nothing that he could say or refuse to say would change that. He nodded.

When, soon after, a chart of the palace was placed on the table, with a trembling forefinger, "It is there," he said thickly. "And may God forgive me for the thing I have done!"

CHAPTER XXX
King Karl

"THEY love us dearly," said King Karl.

The Chancellor, who sat beside him in the royal carriage, shrugged his shoulders. "They have had little reason to love, in the past, Majesty," he said briefly.

Karl laughed and watched the crowd, and the Chancellor rode alone. Karl's thoughts were very modest one, following in another carriage. There was no military escort, no pomp. It had been felt by sympathy, had come ostensibly a visit of sympathy, had come reluctantly.

"But, surely, he observed, in they must be some real lines of people, mostly silent, but now and then giving way to a muttering that sounded curiously like a snarl—"surely I may make a visit of sympathy without exciting wrath?"

"They are children," said Mettlich contemptuously. "Let one girl, and all must be like her, one star a cheer, and they will cheer themselves hoarse."

"Then let some one cheer, for God's sake," said Karl, and turned his mocking smile to the packed streets ahead.

The Chancellor was not so calm as he appeared. He had lined the route from the station to the palace, his men, in red uniforms, every continent, as far as he could without calling out the guard. As the carriage, drawn by its four chestnut horses, moved slowly along the streets, his eyes under their overhanging thatch were watching ahead, searching the crowd for symptoms of unrest.

And Karl, too, watched the crowd, his gentle, smiling face, an indifference he did not feel. Olga Loschek had been right. He did not want trouble. More than that, he was of an age now to crave popularity. Many of the measures which had made him beloved in his own land had no higher purpose than this, the smiles of the people.

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Be it watched and talked of in secret things, but here there is less here than I have been

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By C. A. VOIGHT

here," he observed, "but there are few changes."

"We have built no great buildings," said Mettlich bluntly, "we have left us nothing. Majesty, for building."

"That being so, I must go, to speak."

Karl tried another. "The Crown Prince must be quite a lad," he experimented.

"He was a babe in arms, then, but frail,

"I thought."

"He is sturdy now," the Chancellor replied, in a falsetto.

"Therefore, I see the Princess Hedwig."

Karl made another attempt, "it might be well to tell me how she feels about things. I would like to feel that the prospect is at least not disagreeable to her."

The Chancellor was not listening.

There were trouble ahead. It had come, then after all. He muttered something behind his gray mustache. The horses stopped, as the crowd suddenly closed in front of them.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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